Students Teaching Awareness of Cyber bullying

Article Critique

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**Annotated Bilbiography/Summary**

John Mustacchi, a middle school teacher from Croton-on Hudson, New York, found an innovative way to reach his sixth and eighth graders on a lesson about cyber bullying. He states in his article, “Who better to teach young adolescents about online dangers than other adolescents?” (2009, p.78). In an effort to teach his students about the many internet issues adolescents face today, such as cyber bullying, cyber harassment, online predators, etc., Mr. Mustacchini found a way to incorporate these essential life lessons into his academic curriculum.

A curriculum was developed for his sixth and eighth grades, which consisted of having the eighth graders research, prepare, and present various topics to the sixth graders on the dangers and safety of internet use. At the completion of the presentations, he then had each sixth grade student write an article about what they learned, which would be placed in the school newsletter. The assignments proved to be a valuable learning experience for both grades.

**Critique**

The curriculum, which was developed by John Mustacchi, was a remarkable way to reach his students on such a critical topic. The creativity in which was used in the eighth grade curriculum taught his students standard academic skills, such as public speaking, research, writing, and information technology, but it also taught them life skills through mentoring and ministering to others. The sixth graders benefited as well from this curriculum by learning how to use internet safety as well as understanding the dangers. The information was then reinforced by allowing them to write about what they learned for submittal t the school newsletter, which promoted awareness in other students in the school.

The topics reviewed included internet etiquette, and awareness of how written language can be easily misinterpreted, since there is an absence of voice tone and facial expression. They also taught moral lessons such as, “If you wouldn’t say it to the person’s face, don’t say it online” (p. 80). Other topics taught were awareness of internet predators, cyber bullies, and phishing. The sixth graders were provided with handouts of what to do and what not to do and were encouraged to share them with their parents.

It is well known that we learn best by teaching others. It is also well known that adolescents are more likely to listen to other adolescents before listening to a parent or other adult. This lesson provides both of these principles. By implementing this curriculum, Mr. Mustacchi is sending a great message to the students, teachers, administrators, and parents, that school is a place to learn not only the academic basics, but also essential life lessons.

**Reference:**

Johanna, M. (2009, March). R U Safe? *Educational Leadership*, 66(6), p. 78-82.